



QUEBEC DRAMA FEDERATION

Interim President's Report 2009-2010

Since becoming Interim President of the QDF, it has been my pleasure to be up close and personal as the QDF has taken on a new relevance and importance in English theatre and culture in Quebec.

First off, I would like to congratulate the staff of the QDF for their hard work. Jane Needles, Julia Ainsworth, Alix Pitula, Liz Truchanowicz, without you the ideas we discuss in committee and board meetings would not make it onto the stage of reality. Thank you.

When I first joined the board, the question that we needed to address most urgently was: what does the QDF do for us? I'd like to share a few of our actions from the last several months.

We created a report on touring and presenting performing arts in Quebec. For far too long, Quebec's English theatre companies have not had the information they need on how to keep their shows alive after their initial run. This excellent document provides a comprehensive view on the opportunities, the realities, the possibilities, and the challenges of touring in Quebec. It has been acclaimed by everyone who reads it, from yours truly right up to the Department of Canadian Heritage. I invite everyone who's producing, or interested in producing, to read it.

Parallel to this, we have continued to partner with English Quebec's other arts and culture groups, such as the English-Language Arts Network and the Quebec Writers' Federation, to work with the government to address the needs of English Quebec culture -- and, hopefully, to generate more funding. We spoke this summer at the Senate Committee on Official Language Minorities. We are also working with our cultural partners to develop the same kind of funding structure across several federal departments that our colleagues in francophone Canada outside Quebec enjoy. Our ability to work together at a professional level has enabled us to clear several hurdles at once and make far faster progress than any of us thought possible. We hope that representing Quebec's English theatre community at the political level will soon have an effect on our individual livelihoods.

At the same time, we are closer than ever to our francophone colleagues. You may not be aware of this, but the QDF sits on the board of the Conseil québécois du théâtre, and QDF members automatically are represented by the CQT. This past winter, we were invited to sit on a *la comité de l'animation du milieu*, an invitation I accepted. Working with the CQT, we developed Montreal's World Theatre Day activity and message, and will shortly be launching a survey of CQT and QDF members to find out what kinds of promotional activities we should be developing. Incidentally, the CQT's annual general meeting will be on November 12, from 2 to 7 pm, at the Quebecor Cafe of the Monument-National. We are all invited.

In these last few months, we have also focused our energies on renewing our membership at the emerging artists' level. The second QDF symposium at the Fringe, on self-producing, generated a call

for more focused and practical workshops. Thanks to a partnership with MainLine Theatre, we created a six-workshop series for emerging artists. So far, we've dealt with grantwriting and independent production, to great success.

We have also revitalized the QDF Theatre Calendar, by creating a launch event that showcased 16 productions taking place between September and November. More than 150 people were packed into MainLine that night -- the first time in a long time that we've had an occasion to share our work with each other under the same roof. We're working hard to make sure that the Calendar launches become a regular feature of the season and not just a one-shot. Even if that one shot was heard around Montreal! It is now clear -- even to the Gazette and Le Devoir -- that English theatre is alive and well in 2010.

Thanks to all of our board members for all their hard work. I'd like to mention board members who've stepped down this year. Clare Schapiro and Clint Ward. Thank you both for your generosity and commitment, we all wish you the best with Imago Theatre and the Hudson Music Club. Clare, you can plug your show now....: Lisa Kagan, thank you so much for everything you've done as President of the QDF. I look forward to working with you in your new capacity as Past President. Finally, a huge thank you to Chuck Childs. Chuck has been on the board of the QDF since the Quebec Drama Festival became the Quebec Drama Federation. I hope I can keep calling you with the million questions I'll have.

Thanks, everyone, for the year that's now wrapping up. I hope that we can all continue to work together in the years to come to build on the foundations we've been laying.

Patrick Goddard
Interim President



QUEBEC DRAMA FEDERATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - OCTOBER 25, 2010

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – Jane Needles

Celebrating 38 years of service to the community

This past year has been filled with changes and reexamination of some of the things that the QDF does with and for the community.

Perhaps first and foremost was the decision to close down CSHOW as it was not being used by the community to the extent that was needed to make it a viable operation for the QDF to continue running. The advent of technology and other methods of selling tickets for productions have now taken over the market, and CSHOW was no longer able to maintain the competition. We do thank all the companies that used the system and we note that negotiations are currently underway to have it taken over by another organization so that it remains accessible for those who would like it.

The second most important event was the inauguration of the new web site at the end of March 2010. The new site is much more user-friendly and we have had many positive comments on its “look” and timely information that it can provide. We hope that the membership will utilize its services and pass the word along to colleagues so that everyone can benefit from what QDF can offer to individuals and companies. More work is yet to be completed on the site and funding is being sought to realize this.

And the other most important accomplishment of QDF this year is the producing of the Touring Project Report Phase I which identifies the members of the regional communities who wish to participate in a touring network throughout Quebec. This report names in great detail the performance venues and spaces found in the regions, as well as identifying partners and participants who are ready, willing and eager to welcoming English-language arts and artists into these communities. We are now embarking on Phase II which will concentrate on Montreal area and also the artists themselves who are interested in taking their work out to the regions, as well as beginning the development of the network itself.

Since the launching of the new web site we are noticing an increase in membership numbers which is a very positive sign. However, membership remains one of the major challenges for the organization as it strives to reach everyone within our community and beyond. There is a need to encourage our current members to spread the word and let people and colleagues know what QDF is doing and can do for the community.

Advocacy and lobbying for the English Speaking Theatre Community is an on-going undertaking and very positive results have been achieved over the past year. Perhaps the most important ones are:

- a) The invitation to a “dialogue” session with Industry Canada which was the first time that Arts and Culture have been invited to participate in such a discussion
- b) Continued discussions with the Department of Canadian, Heritage, ELAN and the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network on the development of the Cultural Development Fund continuation for the next five year cycle.

- c) The representation of the Anglophone Theatre Community at the Board level of the Conseil québécoise des ressources humaines en culture for the first time since its inception 10 years ago
- d) The representation of the Anglophone Theatre Community on the Board and several committees of the Conseil québécois du théâtre
- e) The representation of the Arts, Culture, Heritage and Tourism sectors at the Board level of the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (formerly known as the Community Table)
- f) Representation at the Board level of Diversité Artistique Montréal
- g) Participation in many conferences and meetings over the past year with the Community Learning Centres, LearnQuebec, Canadian Parents for French (with whom we are actively engaged in two major projects), Department of Canadian Heritage, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, Senate Committee Hearings on Official Language Minority Communities, to name but a few

The workshop series this year has been completely reworked in view of the discussions with members of the community. This resulted in a collaboration with MainLine in the presentation of the series of 6 directed at the Emerging artists and the other creation of a “Master Class” series for those who are already well established in the profession. Both of these series are funded by Emploi Quebec, and further support funding is being sought from Canada Council.

The Communications Committee has been created and is beginning intensive planning for various methods to address the complexities of getting the message out for the independent and smaller companies, using QDF as the “hub” and “enabler” for this to happen. Members of this committee are from the Board as well as the community (both Francophone and Anglophone) at large.

Staffing is very stable at the office at this time, although we have had to say goodbye to Julia Ainsworth at this point, as she is now teaching full-time at Centennial High School on the South Shore – a position for which she is trained and has been actively seeking to fulfill for quite some time.

Our volunteer committee and the Hi! Team are very strong and continues to grow, although the Hi! Team itself has not been as active this year as in the past. One cannot say if it because theatre companies are finding other solutions for the front-of-house or if companies are forgetting that it is available to them, as part of their membership in QDF. Nevertheless without these people who are the backbone of QDF, the QDF would be hard-pressed to provide as many services as we do. Members of the Hi Team! are: Christine M. Dandurand, Natalie Darbyson, Maya Dhawan, Amelita Flores, Maureen Fung, Sophie Gee, Carolina Garcia Amatos, Davyd Gosselin, Adina Katz, Kevin Kibbey, Bruce Lambie, Travis Martin, Jonathan Marquis, George Mougias, Peter & Joyce Payan, Carmen Rose, Warona Setshwaelo, Vanessa Schmit-Craan, Alicia Short Sylvain, David Sklar, Julia Taminiau, Evalina Turpin and Jacqueline van de Geer. And again, I add special thanks to Peter Payan, Christine Dandurand and Alicia Short Sylvain who are always willing to come to the office and help with whatever is asked of them. They all deserve a very long round of applause.

The collaboration projects with Canadian Parents for French have resulted in the creation of a corps of young actors working through theatre techniques to teach young day care children French. The success of this particular project has led to a demand from at least 20 schools now to have this taught as a part

of their curriculum. Also, a project using Circo Humano to teach skills and team work through circus arts has now grown to something that will also continue on the long term.

Theatre Calendar is now being launched each time it is printed, giving the community an opportunity to come together to share their work, as each company featured in the calendar may perform a short excerpt from their production. Given the success of the first one in September at MainLine, we are looking forward to this particular event as a regular occurrence for the community, and note that it will circulate in various venues around the city.

And so you can see that the QDF has been very active and working hard to respond to the needs as expressed by this community. But I cannot omit my deep gratitude to the Board of Directors, and their commitment and dedication to enabling things to happen. Lisa has left as President, but her seven years of commitment to this particular post demonstrates clearly her loyalty to our community. I look forward to working much more closely with Patrick Goddard as he now takes on the challenge. And to the rest of the Board, I extend my thanks and gratitude for all the support they have provided me with over the past two and a half years. Sadly we say goodbye to Clint Ward who has served the Board diligently as Secretary over the past four years, as he takes on his role as President of Hudson Village Theatre and can now longer devote the time to QDF. Thank you Clint for all the advice and input from the regions which you represented. This mantle has been passed to Peter MacGibbon, a representative from Wakefield Quebec, who I am sure will bring his own expertise and knowledge to the table. Also, thank you to Carolyn Fe Trinidad who committed her time and talents as long as she was able. And last but not least, thank you to Clare Schapiro who also brought laughter and humour to meetings along with wise counsel and thought. And I also welcome Lucinda Davis and June Park who join the Board formally now.

A very deep thank you to the staff – Alix Pitula, Liz Truchanowicz, and Julia Ainsworth as well as Simone Nichol and Nicole Carlone, for their constant work and input in various ways over the months, and for all the work they do quietly behind the scenes. New faces will be added as we move on this year, and I look forward to being able to introduce them to you as they join us. Also, thank you for the hard work undertaken by the CSHOW staff – Megan Bradley, Anders Yates, Alison Darcy, Dan Jeanotte, and Kathleen Painter, who pulled things together and made it run efficiently and effectively.

As we undertake a new year, there are many other people who need to be recognized, in particular our funding partners, Department of Canadian Heritage, and Solange Bourgouin, Tarek Toni and Helen Meredith of the Quebec Regional Office, Dianne Isabelle of CALQ and Clause DesLandes from CAM. WE also thank Emploi Quebec. Individual sponsors and donors also provide us with funding and services in kind which we deeply appreciate – for example Peter McAuslan has kindly provided the beer for the reception tonight and Centaur has provided the wine. There are many others and just because they are not named does not mean that we don't deeply appreciate their support and belief in the work of QDF.

And in closing, a thank you to all of you here tonight and throughout the community for all you do to ensure that the Anglophone Theatre Community continues to flourish and grow. With 67 companies (and growing) as members of the QDF now, (and we note that this does not reflect the total number of companies and groups out there), we can see the incredible increase from 15 years ago when there were 23. Bravo everyone. Here's to us!